

## Claims

- [c1] 1. An apparatus for anonymizing medical data comprising:  
a first communications input receiving one or more patient files, each of said one or more patient files including a patient identifier;  
a pair list database storing a plurality of related pair identifiers, each of said plurality of related pair identifiers including one of said patient identifiers and an associated anonymous identifier;  
a pair list retriever to search said pair list database to find a first associated anonymous identifier paired with a first patient identifier;  
a pair list generator to create a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with a new patient identifier, said new associated anonymous identifier and said new patient identifier comprising a new related pair identifiers, said new related pair identifiers added to said pair list database;  
an anonymous file generator creating one or more anonymous files from said one or more patient files by automatically replacing each of said patient identifiers with its said associated anonymous identifier taken from said related pair identifiers.
- [c2] 2. An apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein each of said patient identifiers includes a patient confidential data.
- [c3] 3. An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:  
a patient file development network in communication with said first communications input, said patient file development network sending said one or more patient files.
- [c4] 4. An apparatus as described in claim 3, wherein said patient file development network comprises at least one image acquisition station.
- [c5] 5. An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:  
at least one primary care network in communication with said first communications input, said at least one primary care network including a hospital archive system.
- [c6] 6. An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:

at least one remote hospital clinic workstation storing said pair list database.

[c7] 7.An apparatus as described in claim 1, further comprising:  
a research and development network in communication with said an anonymous file generator, said research and development network receiving said one or more anonymous files.

[c8] 8.An apparatus as described in claim 7, wherein said research and development network comprises at least one research and development workstation.

[c9] 9.An apparatus as described in claim 5, further comprising:  
a patient file development network in communication with said at least one primary care network, said patient file development network sending said one or more patient files to said at least one primary care network.

[c10] 10.An apparatus for anonymizing medical data comprising:  
a patient file development network, said patient file development network creating one or more patient files, each of one or more patient files including a patient identifier;  
a primary care network in communication with said patient file development network, said at least one primary care network including a hospital archive system for storing said one or more patient files;  
an anonymization network system including a first communications input for receiving said one or more patient files, said anonymization network system including a pair list database storing a plurality of related pair identifiers, each of said plurality of related pair identifiers including one of said patient identifiers and an associated anonymous identifier;  
wherein said anonymization network system creates one or more anonymous files from said one or more patient files by automatically replacing each of said patient identifiers with its said associated anonymous identifier taken from said related pair identifiers.

[c11] 11.An apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein said anonymization network system comprises at least one remote hospital clinic workstation.

[c12] 12.An apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein said first communications

input receives said one or more patient files from said patient file development network.

[c13] 13. An apparatus as described in claim 10, wherein said first communications input receives said one or more patient files from said primary care network.

[c14] 14. An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:  
a research and development network in communication with said anonymization network system, said research and development network receiving said one or more anonymous files from said anonymization network system.

[c15] 15. An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:  
a pair list retriever to search said pair list database to find a first associated anonymous identifier paired with a first patient identifier.

[c16] 16. An apparatus as described in claim 10, further comprising:  
a pair list generator to create a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with a new patient identifier, said new associated anonymous identifier and said new patient identifier comprising a new related pair identifiers, said new related pair identifiers added to said pair list database.

[c17] 17. A method of anonymizing medical data comprising:  
extracting a patient identifier from a patient file;  
searching a plurality of related pair identifiers contained in a pair list database for said patient identifier;  
retrieving an associated anonymous identifier paired to said patient identifier from one of said related pair identifiers;  
replacing said patient identifier with said associated anonymous identifier to create an anonymous file.

[c18] 18. A method as described in claim 17, further comprising:  
generating a new associated anonymous identifier to pair with said patient identifier if said searching a plurality of related pair identifiers fails to find said patient identifier in said pair list database.

[c19] 19. A method as described in claim 17, further comprising:

appending said pair list database to include a new related pair identifiers comprising said new associated anonymous identifier and said patient identifier.

[c20] 20.A method as described in claim 17, wherein said patient files are automatically received from a primary care network.

[c21] 21.A method as described in claim 17, wherein said patient file is automatically received from a patient file development network.